Demo: <http://www.schooltube.com/video/ce8283ffb2234267a08b/Lit-Circle-Demonstration> (approximately 4:10-12 minutes is a good clip)

***Lit Circles***

Other useful websites for videos: youtube.com schooltube.com teachertube.com

**Procedure**

* We do several classes first on how to respond to literature
* First reactions, impressions, questions, etc. done as a web (main ideas in one colour, supporting details in another)
* Pick the top main ideas and turn each into paragraphs
* Introduce concepts of active listening and lit circles (how they work, video demo, how they will be evaluated, etc.)
* Read a short story or poem as a class. Students do a web and come up with two discussion questions
* Divide students into groups and give instructions:
* Choose a leader for the day to keep people on track, direct action, etc.
* Take turns sharing your initial reactions
* Use your discussion questions to continue the conversation
* I often videotape 1-2 circles so that I don’t have to visit each one during the limited time in class. These groups sit in the hallway for a quieter environment to tape in
* At some point, I often stop the circles and give them further instructions (e.g. questions to answer, create a skit)
* Most times, after the circle is done, I have students write an individual response. It can be about the story (drawing on their initial reactions as well as things that came up in their discussion), or it can be a response to the discussion itself or someone else’s reactions
* I often change up the groups each time. Sometimes they are random, sometimes based on a shared trait (such as where they are in the book or their favourite character so far)

**Evaluation**

* Before lit circles are introduced, student responses are assessed and discussed
* Lit circles are evaluated with a rubric (works well if you photocopy one per student and use different colours for different days—easily shows a trend over time). This is part of their Oral Language mark
* Lit journals are collected periodically to see that students have come prepared and/or continued their thinking after the circle is over (on same scale as responses)
* In some classes, students must also respond to a blog post after the lit circle (later that day)